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Security Council

Forty-ninth Year

Provisional

3366th Meeting
Thursday, 21 April 1994, 12 noon
New York

President:	Mr. Keating	(New Zealand)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Cardenas
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	China	Mr. Chen Jian
	Czech Republic	Mr. Vanhara
	Djibouti	Mr. Olhaye
	France	Mr. Ladsous
	Nigeria	Mr. Gambari
	Oman	Mr. Al-Khussaiby
	Pakistan	Mr. Khan
	Russian Federation	Mr. Fedotov
	Rwanda	Mr. Bizimana
	Spain	Mr. Yañez Barnuevo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir David Hannay
	United States of America	Mr. Inderfurth

Agenda

The situation in Liberia

Third progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (S/1994/463)

94-85550 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 12.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Liberia

Third progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (S/1994/463)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Liberia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Bull (Liberia) took a place at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the third progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia, document S/1994/463.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/1994/474, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following revisions to be made to the draft resolution contained in document S/1994/474 in its provisional form.

First, the fifth preambular paragraph should read as follows:

"Commending the positive role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in their efforts to help restore peace, security and stability in Liberia and urging them to continue their efforts with the aim of assisting the Liberian parties to complete the process of political settlement in the country".

Secondly, in the last line of operative paragraph 2, after the words "progress in", the words "disarmament and" should be inserted.

Thirdly, in the first line of operative paragraph 8 the following words should be inserted between the words "ongoing" and "commitment":

"efforts in furthering the peace process in Liberia and its".

That completes the revisions which will be incorporated in the draft resolution before the Council.

The first speaker is the representative of Liberia, on whom I now call.

Mr. Bull (Liberia): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month and on the very effective manner in which you are guiding the work of the Council. I should also like to extend our appreciation to your predecessor for his effective stewardship of the Council during the course of last month.

Permit me to register the sincere appreciation of the Government and people of Liberia to the Secretary-General for his third progress report on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (S/1994/463) of 18 April 1994.

The report outlines the progress made by the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) in the execution of its mandate and identifies outstanding issues which must be resolved by the Liberian parties. It also specifies the support required from the international community in order to help advance the prospects for a peaceful resolution of the Liberian civil conflict.

As the Council is aware, the backdrop of the present efforts to end the conflict in Liberia is the Cotonou Agreement of 25 July 1993. Since its signing, the parties thereto have implemented most of the political components of the Agreement. The Transitional Council

of State was installed on 7 March this year and is now administering the affairs of State.

The National Elections Commission is also engaged in preparatory work for the presidential and legislative elections scheduled for 7 September 1994. Also, the parties have agreed on the distribution of 13 of the 17 Government Cabinet portfolios.

I am pleased to inform the Council that since the Secretary-General's report, based on an earlier agreement between the parties to the conflict, on 19 April 1994 the Transitional Council of State nominated the Ministers of Justice, Finance and Defence for confirmation by the Transitional Legislative Assembly, and, according to information received from Monrovia, they have since been confirmed and sworn into office.

We have been informed that the only remaining portfolio, that of Minister of Foreign Affairs, will be filled shortly.

This is a most welcome development, since the filling of the four remaining ministerial portfolios will facilitate the full operation of the Government.

We also share the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General in his report regarding the delay in the disarmament of the combatants due to the continuation of armed hostilities in the country. The Transitional Council of State has appealed to the parties concerned to discontinue the fighting and allow the peaceful resolution of the conflict, in keeping with the terms of the Cotonou Agreement and the desire of the overwhelming majority of the Liberian people, who are innocent victims of the tragic civil war.

The specific recommendation made by the Secretary-General concerning the need for changes in the constitutional requirements of the electoral procedure is receiving the consideration of the Transitional Council of State. The suggested proposal of the United Nations technical team for the Government to contribute $8.5 million to the electoral process is under review.

What the Liberian people have accomplished respecting the political components of the Cotonou Agreement can be effectively implemented when its military component, the disarmament of the combatants, is executed. In keeping with the Cotonou Agreement, disarmament of the combatants is the responsibility of the Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group (ECOMOG). However, the Liberian National Transitional Government is encouraging dialogue among the parties in order to accelerate the disarmament process.

The Secretary-General's report clearly identifies those problems and the needs which must be addressed. The Elections Commission requires financial assistance for all the elections. Financial and technical assistance will be required for the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Liberia, among other things. In this connection, the delegation of Liberia joins the Secretary-General in his appeal to Member States to continue to contribute to the Trust Fund and to provide increased humanitarian assistance to the country.

At this juncture, I should like to thank the Secretary-General and his Special Representative as well as the Organization of African Unity and member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for their continued sacrificial assistance to the peace process in Liberia. We also thank all friendly Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for their continued support. The people of Liberia will never forget their humanity.

As we continue to make progress in the resolution of the Liberian conflict, I should, however, like to sound a note of caution. The record of reverses in the peace efforts in other troubled areas of the world instructs us to ensure that sufficient security guarantees are in place before the elections are held. The Liberian peace process has all the makings of a success story. Indeed, it will represent a remarkable accomplishment for cooperation between the United Nations and its subregional organization, ECOWAS, in resolving an armed conflict. Therefore, we can only pray that by the grace of Almighty God, the United Nations, through the Security Council, will ensure that a Liberian peace is decided in a final and effective way so that at long last the people of Liberia may be allowed to enjoy the blessings of peace, cohesion and prosperity which they so justly deserve. We therefore endorse the draft resolution before the Council and request that it be unanimously adopted.

The President: I thank the representative of Liberia for the kind words he addressed to me.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it, as

orally revised in its provisional form. If I hear no objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Gambari (Nigeria): My delegation has read with great interest the very useful report of the Secretary-General contained in document S/1994/463 of 18 April 1994, the third in the series of progress reports on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). We welcome this report and commend the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Trevor Gordon-Somers, for the untiring efforts which they have continued to bring to bear on the Liberian peace process.

My delegation is pleased to note that the Liberian parties have now successfully completed a number of important steps in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, not the least of which have been the installation of the Council of State of the Transitional Government, which took place on 7 March this year; the simultaneous commencement of disarmament; and the induction into office on 11 March of the Transitional Legislative Assembly. These are undoubtedly very important developments, and we commend the parties for their positive efforts in making these gains possible.

However, several difficulties stand in the way of achieving a durable peace in Liberia as soon as members of the Council would like it to happen. Three of these difficulties may be cited, as follows.

First, despite the installation of the Council of State of the Transitional Government more than a month ago, controversy over some Cabinet appointments has persisted and consequently prevented the full functioning of both the Transitional Government and the Transitional Legislative Assembly.

Secondly, the disarmament process, despite the initial optimism at its commencement, has not made much significant progress. This has been due not only to the logistical and other related practical difficulties faced by the ECOWAS Military Observer Group (ECOMOG), but also because of the renewed fighting between both old and newly emerging factions in parts of the country.

Thirdly, with regard to the electoral process, a number of issues still have to be addressed, including voter education, the repatriation of refugees and displaced persons and the mobilization of resources required for the election. All of these issues require very urgent attention by the parties if the scheduled election date of 7 September is to be kept, as is the wish and demand of the international community.

The draft resolution on Liberia on which we are about to vote represents, in the view of my delegation, a satisfactory effort to move the Liberian peace process forward for the following reasons.

First, by deciding to extend UNOMIL's mandate for another six months, as recommended by the Secretary-General, the draft resolution underscores continued international and United Nations support for the Liberian peace process.

However, in making specific provisions for a first review of the Liberian situation by 18 May, in a few weeks' time, the draft resolution underlines the need for the parties to take concrete steps to move the peace process forward as a basis for continued United Nations support.

Secondly, the draft resolution urges the Liberian parties to cease all hostilities everywhere in Liberia and to cooperate fully with ECOMOG in completing the disarmament process. This, in the view of my delegation, is of crucial importance for the restoration of confidence between the parties, the early return and settlement of refugees, the functioning of the Transitional Government, and the prospects of holding the elections by the date scheduled.

Finally, the draft resolution recognizes the necessity for additional contributions to the Liberian Trust Fund, increased assistance to ECOMOG to enable it to cope satisfactorily with the tasks assigned to it under the Cotonou Agreement and, perhaps even more importantly, support for humanitarian and development activities in Liberia. Accordingly, the draft resolution encourages Member States to provide such support.

In conclusion, the Liberian people have endured great hardships over the past four years, hardships which should no longer continue. While the international community has been very supportive of the Liberian people in their efforts to achieve peace and in addressing the enormous humanitarian and refugee problems

occasioned by this hopeless and senseless war, the scope of the problems remains serious. For its part, the Government of Nigeria, which has stood by Liberia from the very beginning of its present crisis, will not now be found wanting. Therefore, my delegation renews its appeal to the international community as a whole to continue and indeed redouble its efforts to assist the people of Liberia in the enormous tasks of reconstruction which lie ahead of them.

The President: I shall now put the draft resolution contained in document S/1994/474, as orally revised in its provisional form, to the vote.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Brazil, China, Czech Republic, Djibouti, France, New Zealand, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution, as orally revised in its provisional form, has been adopted unanimously as resolution 911 (1994).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Inderfurth (United States of America): The United States is pleased to see that the Liberian parties have made some progress, albeit limited, towards implementing the peace process since the Council's last meeting on Liberia in February. However, we remain concerned by the delays and obstacles to the peace process erected by several of the parties. We are also gravely concerned by the continued occurrence of violence.

The world at the moment is witness to numerous bloody and senseless conflicts, all of which demand the attention of the international community and place enormous burdens on the United Nations. It would truly be a tragedy if Liberia were to slip back into the horror of civil war. It is incumbent on all the parties in Liberia to work towards a peaceful future for Liberia. The international community is trying to assist in this process. The mechanisms for peace were laid out in the Cotonou Agreements. The Security Council will be watching closely to see that the parties carry through on their commitments and stick to the timetables to which they agreed.

The resolution just adopted by the Security Council provides for two reviews in the coming months, one to check on whether the parties have resolved their differences over several key Cabinet posts and the next to check on overall progress. We expect the Liberians, by 30 June, to have passed certain goalposts: first, that the Liberian National Transitional Government will not only be fully installed, but also operating effectively in Monrovia and beyond; secondly, that additional disarmament and demobilization camps will have been established and that approximately 30 per cent of the combatants will have been disarmed; thirdly, that the Elections Commission will be actively planning for the 7 September elections, including setting up a timetable for the registration of voters, filing candidacies and other vital preparatory activities; and, fourthly, that the cease-fire is generally holding.

The attainment of these goals is essential for the successful continued presence of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia. If the parties cannot pass these goalposts, my Government will be prepared, in the Council, to seek consideration of whether the Mission ought to be curtailed or terminated.

We have heard reports that the parties may have moved recently towards filling some of the outstanding Cabinet posts. Let me just say, in closing, that we hope this will lead to the resolution of the political impasse in Liberia. The effectiveness of the Transitional Government depends on the active cooperation and involvement of each of the signatories of the Cotonou Agreement.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): Brazil voted in favour of resolution 911 (1994) because we are convinced that the Security Council should continue to lend its resolute support to the efforts to bring the parties in Liberia together and to open up a new era of peace and stability in that country. In this regard, my delegation is deeply appreciative of the untiring and creative role played by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Trevor Gordon-Somers. In the same vein, we commend the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for its efforts in helping to restore peace and security in Liberia.

Positive steps have been taken by the parties on the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, such as the

installation of the Council of State of the Transitional Government and the start of the disarmament process. Yesterday the Council received information on the process of nominating three Cabinet members of the Transitional Government, which is an encouraging development in the peace process.

Notwithstanding the progress made, outbreaks of violence, problems in delivering humanitarian assistance and the considerable number of refugees and displaced persons could still put in jeopardy all that has been achieved so far.

We welcome the decision of the parties to hold free and fair elections on 7 September 1994 and urge them strictly to observe the agreed date so as to enable the peace process to move forward. As to the electoral system to be applied in these elections, we expect that the parties will decide on the system they deem would best suit the needs of the people of Liberia on the basis of effectively free and fair elections. The current extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) for an additional six-month period is very important, bearing in mind that it runs beyond the time of the elections.

The parties should persevere in their political efforts and cooperate with UNOMIL and the ECOWAS Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) towards the full implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, which is the framework for a durable peace in Liberia. To do otherwise would send a wrong signal to the international community and put at risk a painstaking and carefully crafted peace negotiation. The Council, for its part, should continue monitoring the situation closely in order to encourage the parties in Liberia in their endeavours towards a positive settlement of the situation and to caution against any undue delay in the peace process.

The President: There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.